



Photos by Laura Pellegrino

Staff Sgt. Robert Eoehle attaches practice bombs to a Tornado.

GAF: Flying high at Holloman

by Laura Pellegrino
Sunburst staff writer

German air force members have been traveling across the globe to Holloman Air Force Base since 1996.

Today, 683 active duty GAF members and 971 family members call Holloman and the surrounding areas home.

The environment at Holloman is ideal for training pilots, which is why the German Air Force Flying Training Center has been successful here.

“The Holloman, White Sands and White Sands Missile Range areas offer flight instructors optimal weather conditions for training,” according to the Web site www.flgausbzlw.net.

GAF mission

The purpose of the GAF FTC is to instruct German pilots on the weapon system of the 35 Tornados here, said Capt. Andreas Seeboeger, GAF simulator instructor.

German fighter pilots and navigators go through training similar to that of their U.S. coun-



Second Lt. Mathias Schumann performs weapons systems training in a Tornado simulator.

terparts. They start in ground school, learning from teachers through a combination of books and computer programs.

“With the computers, we train on emergency procedures with much more background,” said 2nd Lt. Alexander Krysak, navigator. “It’s not with only a book and teacher talking to you. We learn with small animations and videos.”

After completing ground school, pilots spend time in the simulator.

Fighter pilots go through 16 simulated weapons system training missions. Once they master the simulator, they move on to the flight line.

Flight instructors go through nine missions intended to simulate what could happen while teaching a new pilot.

“With the simulator, we’re able to show everything we can’t show in an actual airplane,” Seeboeger said. “We can give them



Left to right: Staff Sgt. Marco Clauss and Airman 1st Class Marco Heotner prepare ammunition for the Tornado.



Left to right: Second Lt. Georg Hirdes and 2nd Lt. Christain Blohm plan out a course before flight.

an engine fire or other actual emergencies.”

Flight support

Not all German air force members stationed at Holloman are pilots and navigators. The logistics group, which includes all maintenance members, supports the flying training mission.

In life support, GAF members ensure all survival equipment is ready for use.

“We take care of helmets, masks, g-suits,” said Staff Sgt. Robert King. “We check the equipment before and after flight.”

It’s important to make sure all of the survival equipment will work in an emergency, so inspections are done every 30 days, King said. Larger inspections are done every 90 days, and after a year, the equipment is taken apart and detailed.

GAF members stationed at Holloman can stay anywhere from three to six years, depending on requests by the individual and the needs of the German air force.

Right: Staff Sgt. Michael Wirtz, Life Support member, replaces parts on a survival kit.

